

LAWSON LUNDELL IS 'BRINGING IN BUILDERS'

ON A SOLID GROWTH TRAJECTORY, FIRM WELCOMES THREE NEW PARTNERS TO UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP

TO BORROW from Shakespeare, Lawson Lundell LLP is “in its salad days”: a period of promise and unlimited potential. For managing partner Cliff Proudfoot, KC, it’s an invigorating time to sit at the helm.

“We have young partners joining our ranks who are keen to grow their practices and carry the torch over the next 20 years,” he says, adding that mandatory retirement at 65 from the equity partnership and no age restrictions for those coming in makes for a dynamic mix.

“Combined with our longstanding culture of teamwork and respect, the firm is on a march.”

Bringing in builders

Lawson Lundell recently welcomed three new partners – Garrett Lee, Ed Wang, and Aron Balakrishnan; these additions align with the firm’s strategy of fostering a youthful partnership and reinforcing its presence in key practice areas. For example, the firm’s already-busy real estate practice has grown, and Balakrishnan joining the team in Calgary supports that expansion. He brings with him “a great book of business and a fabulous demeanour,” Proudfoot notes.

The banking and finance group, already one of the biggest and busiest in Vancouver, is also ramping up. Some of its growth is tied to real estate financing, but it’s also bolstered by demand for more niche areas, which the firm is keeping pace with – including via the hiring of Wang. His arrival provides a much-needed boost to the group, and he also brings a solid background in aircraft,

transportation, and leveraged finance, deepening the team’s specialization.

As for Lee, who spent time at the firm as a junior, deputy managing partner Karen MacMillan calls his return timely. A strategic hire for the corporate finance and securities group tasked with leading the growing junior issuer practice, Lee also rounds out the tech team with his TSX-V experience.

“Trade war uncertainty aside, in the last few quarters, a number of sectors have come roaring back, and Garrett plays right into the areas we need to build out,” she says. “These additions bring the same energy. They’re young, eager to build, and possess in-demand expertise. We’re thrilled to have them on board.”

A culture that attracts top talent

Beyond its premier legal services, Lawson Lundell sets itself apart in several ways. One is its “local mind and management,” which MacMillan says allows for personalized decision making, especially with innovative young builders.

Also crucial is the firm’s culture. MacMillan can speak to the unfettered support she’s received in her nearly three decades with Lawson Lundell. Never imagining herself as “a lifer” in any firm, she’s stayed with “a group of thoughtful people open to new ideas.”

“Lawson Lundell is surprisingly flexible, which is unique in a large business law firm,” she says, adding that when she reached a work-life balance breaking point 17 years ago while in the thick of raising her young

children, she approached then-managing partner Brian Fulton about a flexible work arrangement. Far from the expectation at that time, she braced herself to step away for a time from the job she loved.

“Brian stopped me mid-sentence and said, ‘Just tell me what you need,’” MacMillan recalls. “That’s the kind of culture we have here. I’ve shared that story with many young women, so they understand it’s deep in our DNA: we do what it takes to keep talented people who ultimately add tremendous value.”

On an upward trajectory

For Proudfoot, a 34-year veteran, the unique partnership model keeps him invested in the firm’s trajectory. Calling the story of Lawson Lundell’s expansion organic, “Our philosophy is growing young partners and supporting them, which leads naturally to more growth.”

MacMillan adds that no discussion of Lawson Lundell’s progress is complete without acknowledging Proudfoot’s role as “a master of identifying opportunities for growth and convincing just the right people to come on board to execute it.”

“I have the great pleasure of following his lead,” she says. “Lawson Lundell’s well-established pattern of pivoting to new opportunities and flexing with the times keeps it exciting for us all.” ■

Lawson Lundell LLP is a leading full-service business law firm in Western and Northern Canada known for our practical, strategic approach to legal and business problems. Our experience providing a variety of legal services to a diverse range of clients provincially, nationally, and internationally allows us to deliver quality client service, whatever their particular needs. The approach and philosophy that guides our legal work has been developed through decades of working with our clients and understanding their business and industry objectives.

Cliff Proudfoot, KC
Managing partner
Karen MacMillan
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